

REMARKS

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication by the Examiner that claims 2-4 and 7-8 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. While Applicants believe that the claims rejected over the prior art are equally allowable, the claims have been restricted to the indicated allowable subject matter in an effort to expedite the prosecution to early allowance.

Accordingly, to place the application in condition for allowance, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 2. That is, claim 2 has in effect been rewritten as claim 1. Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer as redundant.

Additionally, claim 5 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 7 and, accordingly, claim 5 is now in condition for allowance. Claim 7 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer as redundant.


The prior art rejections of claims 1, 5 and 6 have been carefully considered but are most respectfully traversed in view of the amendments to the claims. The limitations of allowable claims 2 and 7 have been included in claims 1 and 5, respectively, placing claims 1 and 5 in condition for allowance.

Claims 3, 4, 6 and 8 depend either directly or indirectly on an allowable claim and are therefore equally in condition for allowance. All of the claims remaining in the application are in fully compliance with 35 USC 112 and are clearly patentable over the references of record.

Application No.: 10/751,502
Amendment dated: January 3, 2005
Reply to Office Action of: September 5, 2004

In view of the above amendments, reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims now present in the application is most respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
BACON & THOMAS, PLLC


RICHARD E. FICHTER
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 26,382

Date: January 3, 2005

BACON & THOMAS, PLLC
625 Slaters Lane, Fourth Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone: 703-683-0500
Facsimile: 703-683-1080

REF/jrs
A01.wpd